



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 9 December 1966



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DAILY BRIEF
9 DECEMBER 1966

1. South Vietnam

Ky went on television today to blast away at the Viet Cong for Tran Van Van's murder. The accused assassin also came before the cameras. Many Saigon circles are cynical about the published evidence and there is a widespread conviction that the government was behind the killing.

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Retail prices in Saigon shot up during the week ending on Monday. With the exception of the peak reached during the September elections, they are now at their highest level of the year.

This latest increase was due partly to a drop in deliveries of rice and pork from the provinces. However, non-food items also rose. All told, there was a seven-percent hike in the retail price index.

2. Soviet Union

The Soviet-French statement winding up Kosygin's visit is an unimpressive thing. No new agreements are recorded. The statement does go on at some length reiterating joint views of the Vietnam war as a "threat to peace."

Kosygin clearly failed to lessen De Gaulle's opposition to a nonproliferation treaty. On the issue of Germany, there was apparently nothing the two leaders could agree to say--so they said nothing.

The initial reaction of one more than normally excitable French official was, however, that the visit was more significant than the joint statement suggests. This man, a foreign ministry official, said that Kosygin's visit was the prelude to close Franco-Soviet collaboration in "all domains," including communications, scientific exchanges, trade, and consular relations.

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4. France

De Gaulle is as strong as ever against British membership in the Common Market. He does not have the French public with him on this, however, and would find it more difficult this time to bar Britain with an out-and-out veto.

Paris is expected, therefore, to try an end run. It is likely to dwell on the suspicion among the other members that London's still unspecified conditions will require unacceptable changes in the community.

5. Bolivia

President Barrientos tried to face down a hostile crowd of 4,000 miners this afternoon--and failed. He had traveled to the mine unarmed and alone in a courageous attempt to head off a bloody confrontation between the striking miners and the national guard.

The miners still show no sign of heeding a government ultimatum to get out of the mines. Troops are standing close by, ready to enforce the government order. The strike has so far been a localized affair, but an armed clash at this mine could well lead to trouble at others.

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6. Rhodesia

Ian Smith is working hard to advertise his willingness to keep the door open for a settlement. He may even go ahead and implement many of the points of the constitutional agreement he concluded with Wilson last weekend. He will surely not give in, however, to Wilson's demand that the British hold effective power in Rhodesia during the interim before legal independence.

Smith's acceptance of British positions on the basic constitutional issues could, if it comes to pass, ultimately bring Wilson back to the conference table. We may not yet have seen the last of London's "final" offers to Rhodesia.

7. Jordan

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